

2002 Annual Report Executive Summary

Southeast Oklahoma Enterprise Community

As we draw near the end of our Enterprise Community designation and look back on our accomplishments over the past eight years, we stand proud in all that the community, working together, has achieved. We have seen improvements in infrastructure, housing, safety, social/human development, education and economic development. Although there is still much work to be done, which will continue even beyond EC/CC designation, we are well on our way. We have strengthened existing partnerships and formed new ones as well. Many of our partners have been with us since the beginning of designation, have partnered on multiple projects, and are considered a vital part of the effort, regardless of how large or small their roles in the implementation of our communities strategic plans.

To date, we have completed approximately 90% of the actions in our Enterprise Community strategic plan and about 30% in our Champion Community (Round II) plan. A dedicated and motivated community with residents and business men and women who donate time, money, materials, technical assistance, labor, etc... to various projects are due much of the credit for our community's successes. Through the Enterprise Community efforts, our area has leveraged nearly \$80 million specifically for those projects identified in our strategic plan. This dollar amount is conservative inasmuch as it reflects only those "tracked" dollars as reported in our Enterprise and Champion Community benchmarks. It does not account for the value of in-kind services, material and land donations, volunteer labor, technical assistance and other resources/support which have made implementation of many of these projects possible. Furthermore, it does not reflect the dollars brought in through secondary outputs, i.e. salaries from the jobs created, construction contracts awarded, or revenue for area businesses (lumber yards, electrical and plumbing contractors and others).

In 2002, others outside of our community began to take notice of the area's growth and improvements and made crucial business decisions based on their observations. Identified in the "Most Significant Accomplishments" section of this report are two such entities. One company, "American Native Beef", selected Hugo Oklahoma as the site for locating a major beef processing facility which will provide 237 jobs for the area. Executives of the company stated that one of the major attractions which led to their selection of Hugo was the area's Enterprise Community status. A separate entity began development of 54 lots adjacent to Hugo Lake State Park (a major EC tourism project) in July. A spokesman for this group stated they had been reviewing the work of Little Dixie Community Action Agency and the United States Department of Agriculture in the areas of economic development and felt it was time for private enterprise to step up and continue the effort. Upon completion, these sites will provide for restricted moderate-income housing featuring added attractions including an equestrian center as well as an 18-hole golf course. Improvements in our Enterprise and Champion Communities occurring in 2002 included additional improvements to the runway and hangars at the Stan Stamper Municipal Airport. This will allow for larger aircraft to utilize these facilities and is critical to our long term goals of attracting larger industry.

Choctaw County Library received a \$2.1 million dollar grant from the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation for construction of a new library facility. The land for the new facility was purchased through various means of support including Enterprise Community funding, a Sarkeys Foundation grant and local fundraising efforts. A local landscaping business owner has pledged donation of landscaping services in addition to providing shrubs, trees, and flowers once the facility is complete.

Award of a HUD Section 202 grant of more than \$1.4 million dollars will result in a supportive housing complex for elderly low-income families in the Enterprise Community. The 20 unit one bedroom

apartments will be conveniently located adjacent to the Senior Nutrition Center and will provide support services such as cleaning and transportation. Elderly, low-income individuals aged 62 or older are qualified applicants. Site work has already begun at the site which will also feature a small park for residents to enjoy.

The Southeast Oklahoma Enterprise and Champion communities both have been very busy this past year working towards the implementation of our plans. As you can see, we have been working in all areas of need including housing, education, economic development, safety, and social/human development. Our communities' hard work is beginning to pay off and our plans are to continue with the efforts. We still have much work to be done but we are certainly getting there.